

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MEXICO 08593 092214Z

64

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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P 092029Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4227

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 8593

EXDIS

TO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR OAS CU MX US

SUBJECT: TOPICS FOR PRESIDENTIAL MEETING: OAS, CUBA

1. FOLLOWING COMMENTS MAY BE USEFUL TO DEPARTMENT IN PREPARING BRIEFING PAPERS FOR THE PRESIDENT ON SUBJECTS WHICH MAY ARISE DURING SUBJECT MEETING.

2. OAS:

A. THERE APPEARS TO BE SOME GAP BETWEEN PUBLIC STATEMENTS OF PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA AND PRIVATE ATTITUDE OF FOREIGN SECRETARIAT ON THIS SUBJECT. ECHEVERRIA HAS REPEATEDLY CALLED OAS "OBSOLETE", AND "MORIBUND" AND CLEARLY WANTS TO SEE ITS CHARACTER FUNDAMENTALLY ALTERED. DURING HIS RECENT SOUTH AMERICAN TOUR, ECHEVERRIA CALLED FOR A NEW REGIONAL ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION WHICH WOULD, IN EFFECT, EXCLUDE U.S. THOUGH HE DID NOT SUGGEST THAT SUCH AN ORGANIZATION WOULD REPLACE THE OAS, IT WOULD (IF IDEA PROSPERED, WHICH IT HAS NOT THUS FAR) CLEARLY SUPPLANT SOME PRESENT OAS FUNCTIONS.

B. GOM, HOWEVER, AS REPRESENTED BY ACTIONS VS. WORDS, CONTINUES TO PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN THE OAS AND PLAYS A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN EFFORTS TO REFORM THE OAS FROM WITHIN. FOREIGN SECRETARIAT ASSIGNS SOME OF ITS BEST DIPLOMATS TO OAS AFFAIRS, AND THE GOM CAMPAIGNS ACTIVELY FOR ELECTIVE AND SECRETARIAT POSITIONS. MEXICANS MISS NO OPPORTUNITY

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MEXICO 08593 092214Z

TO USE OAS FORUM AS SOUNDING BOARD FOR GOM POSITIONS

ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES. GOM IS REALLY SEEKING TO ORIENT OAS MORE TOWARDS LATIN AMERICAN INTERESTS AND AWAY FROM WHAT IT CONSIDERS ARE OUTDATED US SECURITY CONCERNS. EMBASSY DOUBTS THAT ECHEVERRIA WILL RAISE TOPIC OF OAS FOR SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION BUT MAY REFER TO IT IN CONNECTION WITH OTHER TOPICS, INCLUDING THAT OF CUBA.

3. CUBA: DURING PAST YEAR GOM HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY VOCAL IN SUPPORT OF VIEW THAT CUBA SHOULD RETURN TO THE INTER-AMERICAN "FAMILY". (MEXICANS HAVE GENERALLY BEEN CAREFUL TO POINT OUT THAT CASTRO IS NOT INTERESTED IN RETURNING TO THE OAS.) THE GOM'S PRIMARY MOTIVATION APPEARS TO BE RELATED TO ITS CONTINUING EFFORTS TO ENHANCE MEXICO'S STANDING WITH THE THIRD WORLD. TO A SOMEWHAT LESSER EXTENT, MEXICO SEEKS A LEADING ROLE AMONG LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES AND CLEARLY BELIEVES THAT RESTORATION OF CUBA TO SOME SORT OF STRUCTURED, RESPECTABLE STANDING WITHIN THE HEMISPHERE IS AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME. DESPITE THE FOREGOING, HOWEVER, IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR, PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA EVIDENCES AT LEAST SOME CONTINUING CONCERN OVER CUBA'S POLITICAL SYSTEM AND ROLE IN THE CARIBBEAN AND LA. HE FEELS, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT JAMAICA SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED, PRESUMABLY AS A COUNTERWEIGHT TO CUBA IN THE CARIBBEAN. APPARENTLY HE HAS STILL NOT SET A DATE FOR HIS LONG-FORECAST VISIT TO CUBA, THOUGH HE SENDS CABINET MINISTERS FROM TIME TO TIME IN ORDER, HE SAYS, TO DELAY HIS OWN VISIT THERE. IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT ECHEVERRIA WILL URGE THE US SUPPORT MEASURES TO END CUBA'S PRESENT CONDITION OF OSTRACISM.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, REORGANIZATIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: elyme
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974MEXICO08593
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740287-0403
From: MEXICO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741060/aaaabzgg.tel
Line Count: 92
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: elyme
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 SEP 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <05 MAR 2003 by elyme>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TOPICS FOR PRESIDENTIAL MEETING: OAS, CUBA
TAGS: PFOR, CU, MX, US, OAS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005